Ka Momona O Ka ʻĀina

The Bounty of the Land

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Locally Grown: Hawaiian Strawberries

Yes, strawberries do grow in Hawaii — and they're delicious! Known for their sweet flavor and intense aroma, Hawaiian-grown strawberries offer a unique twist on a familiar favorite. While California dominates U.S. strawberry production (producing roughly 88–90% of the national supply), Hawaii has been carving out its own niche in strawberry farming.

Strawberries aren't native to Hawaii, but they thrive in the islands' cooler, elevated regions. Farms in Kula on Maui and Waimea on Hawaii Island have become well-known for producing high-quality berries. Unlike mainland strawberries, which are typically harvested in June, Hawaii's mild climate allows for an earlier season—from February through April. Some farms, like Kula Country Farms, take advantage of varying elevations to extend their harvests throughout the year, growing at higher altitudes in summer and lower ones in winter.

So the next time you're shopping at a local market, keep an eye out for these locally grown gems—your tastebuds will thank you!

Strawberries: Tiny Fruits, Big Benefits

Strawberries aren't just tasty—they're also a powerhouse of nutrition. Low in calories and packed with water, fiber, and essential nutrients, they make a refreshing and healthy snack. Here's what you'll find in 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of raw strawberries:

Calories: 32
Water: 91%
Protein: 0.7g
Carbohydrates: 7.7g
Sugar: 4.9g
Fiber: 2g
Fat: 0.3g
Key Health Benefits:
Vitamin C: A potent antioxidant that boosts your immune system and supports skin health.
Folate (Vitamin B9): Essential for cell function and tissue growth—especially important for pregnant women.
Potassium: Helps regulate blood pressure and supports heart health.
Additional nutrients: Strawberries also offer smaller amounts of iron, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamins B6, K, and E.
Whether blended into a smoothie, tossed into a salad, or enjoyed fresh from the farm, strawberries are a sweet way to nourish your body.

Locally Grown: Hawaiian Strawberries

Yes, you can grow strawberries in a home garden in Hawaii! To grow strawberries successfully in your garden, start with the basics:

- Sunlight: Strawberries love the sun. Choose a location that receives at least 6–8 hours of direct sunlight each day.
- Soil: Aim for well-drained, slightly acidic soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.8. Improve soil fertility by mixing in compost or other organic matter.
- Watering: Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during early growth and fruiting stages. Avoid waterlogging, which can lead to root rot

Summer Strawberry Salad

Ingredients

1/3 cup chopped macadamia or walnuts (tossed)
1/2 small red onion (thinly sliced Soak in cold water to remove bite)
5 ounces fresh baby spinach
5 ounces arugula
1 quart strawberries hulled and quartered (about 1 pound)
3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese (buy the block-style feta)

Dressing
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions

Prepare the dressing: In small mixing bowl whisk together all of the dressing ingredients vinegar, oil, sugar, mustard, salt, and pepper until well combined.
Assemble the salad
Place the spinach and arugula in a great big serving bowl. Add the strawberries.
Drain the red onion and add it as well. Drizzle about half of the dressing over the salad and toss to coat the leaves. Assess the amount of dressing. You want the spinach leaves to be nicely moistened but not swimming in dressing. Add a little more if needed to suit your preferences.
Add the feta and macadamia nuts. Toss lightly to combine. Serve immediately, with extra dressing on the side as desired.

Contributing to a Cleaner Environment, Family Fun, and Education through Gardening

In today's world, where environmental issues are becoming more pressing, every small effort counts in creating a cleaner and healthier planet. Gardening plays a crucial role in promoting a cleaner environment. By planting flowers, vegetables, and trees, families can reduce their carbon footprint, improve air quality, and support biodiversity. Plants naturally absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, helping to purify the air around us. Moreover, home gardens reduce the need for store-bought produce.

Gardening is more than just planting seeds—it's an interactive and educational experience. For children, it opens a window into the world of nature and science. They learn how plants grow, the importance of soil and water, and the role of insects and pollinators. These hands-on lessons instill an early appreciation for the environment and the importance of sustainability. Families can make gardening a fun group activity by assigning roles, setting up small competitions, or creating themed garden beds. Whether it's growing herbs for cooking, planting flowers to attract butterflies, or building compost bins, each task fosters teamwork, responsibility, and creativity.

Another significant benefit of gardening is promoting healthy eating habits. Growing your own vegetables and fruits encourages families to consume fresh, organic produce. Children are more likely to try new foods they've helped grow, leading to healthier dietary choices and a greater understanding of where food comes from.

Gardening is a powerful tool for environmental awareness and family bonding. It encourages eco-friendly habits, promotes education and health, and turns simple outdoor fun into a long-lasting contribution to a cleaner world. By planting a garden, families aren't just growing food—they're nurturing a sustainable future.